

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.

Agenda Item No.

4(ii)

COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 10.00AM

Agenda Item No.

5A(ii)

**SCRUTINY OF THE INTEGRATED PLAN PROPOSALS 2016/17 – 2019/20:
Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the Assistant Director, Finance, Resources and Performance

Authors: Natalie Rotherham, Scrutiny Officer (Tel: 01992 555300)
Michelle Diprose, Democratic Services Officer (Tel: 01992 555566)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Cabinet and County Council of

- (a) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's scrutiny of the integrated plan (IP) proposals 2016/17 – 2019/20, including consideration of options identified by the Executive for meeting the unfunded savings gap for 2016/17; and
- (b) the comments and suggestions made by the Committee as a result of that scrutiny.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At its meeting on 11 December 2015, prior to its formal scrutiny, the Committee received a briefing from the Assistant Director of Finance, Resources and Performance, who provided Members with an authority-wide overview of resources, pressures and key issues for the Council for 2016/17 and future years.
- 2.2 The Committee's scrutiny of the Integrated Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 was conducted over two days; commencing on 27 January 2016, when it gathered its evidence via a 'scrutiny café', and concluding on 3 February 2016, when it agreed its comments and suggestions for Cabinet's consideration. These are set out in section 3 of the report below.

3. Committee Comments

3.1 Options for meeting the budget shortfall for 2016/17

- 3.1.1 The Committee suggested that further evaluation be undertaken before any reductions are made to the Member Locality Budget and

that consideration should be given amalgamating the Member Locality Budget and the Member Highways Budget.

3.1.2 Members suggested combining with 5% reduction overall to achieve the required budget cut and a minimum £85k Highways spend and £10k maximum Locality spend.

3.1.3 There were no other comments on the potential options identified by Cabinet for meeting the budget shortfall in 2016/17.

3.2 Committee Suggestions

3.2.1 That Cabinet gives consideration to the following:-

1. Assessing the impact on the Council's services of the changing demographics in the County so that future pressures and challenges can be addressed through detailed service plans and within the financial constraints within which the Council is operating.
2. Improving and strengthening partnership working through the further development of the relationships between all County Council departments and their stakeholders, including Health, the LEP, other tiers of local government and the voluntary sector.
3. Investigating how localism and devolution activities can directly involve partners, particularly lower-tier authorities, rather than being driven in a 'top-down' manner; and how they can be used to better support local economic development and prosperity. Members would welcome Highways Together options being extended to district and borough councils where possible.
4. Enabling smaller and medium sized local businesses to better understand the County Council's procurement processes to promote the local economy.
5. Investigating what further departmental and cross-portfolio/partnership working opportunities exist to ensure utilisation of the expertise and experience of trained officers (e.g. Fire & Rescue former frontline officers) / staff (e.g. Highways officers drafting TROs) across different services to generate future savings and service resilience.
6. Continuing to look for opportunities to maximise the use of the Council's assets:
 - (a) To ensure the most appropriate sites are used for services, including co-location e.g. retained fire stations and libraries
 - (b) To further encourage services and partners to share accommodation

- (c) To ensure rental charges help address budget challenges
- (d) To examine ways of increasing business and income through County Council traded services.

7. Developing a clear strategy for encouraging and supporting volunteering across services and providing further support for stakeholders and volunteers in helping deliver services for the community.
8. Encouraging bus companies and community transport providers to maintain routes after HCC subsidies have been withdrawn.
9. As a matter of urgency, Hertfordshire Leaders Group and Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP) address the strategic infrastructure planning issues, particularly with regard to housing development, to assess future budgetary implications for the Council arising from inadequate setting of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
10. Transferring the Dial-A-Ride service from Environment to Adult Care and Health and lowering the qualifying age limit for those able to use the service to 60.
11. All future portfolio papers clarify statutory and non-statutory obligations and priorities within the Service's financial constraints.

3.2.2 The Committee also requested that Cabinet and Cabinet Panels note its comments below:-

Children's Services

1. That waiting times for the Family Safeguarding Project be reviewed and improved.
2. That the recording of asylum seeking children be reviewed.
3. That the transition from Statement to Education Health & Care Plan implications inform service provision and development e.g. changing needs are identified

Community Safety and Waste Management

4. That the risks and uncertainties associated with legislative change, changes to residents life-style and waste generation, feature in the proposals to manage Hertfordshire's residual waste, be reviewed in detail.

Environment, Planning and Transport

5. That the impact on the budget of removing trees across County owned land be investigated so that provision can be put in place to meet the cost of this potential risk.

Highways

6. That the potential for carrying out project work concurrently rather than the current step by step approach; and undertaking work concurrently with partners, be explored to improve future cost efficiencies and customer experience.
7. That Government be lobbied with a view to making public highways data from other local authorities available to assist with benchmarking as these data are not available in the public domain.

3.2.3 The Leader of the Council and relevant Executive Members are asked to respond to these comments and suggestions prior to the Committee's meeting on 20 April 2016.

4. Background

- 4.1 As agreed by Members, the Committee received background and contextual information from the Assistant Director, Finance, Resources and Performance at its meeting in December 2015. The Director's report provided the Committee with an authority-wide overview of resources, pressures and key issues for the Council for the forthcoming period. As well as providing the Committee with the information necessary to inform its scrutiny, the briefing also provided Members with an opportunity for preliminary discussion on the Council's draft Integrated Plan and to identify some of the issues they wished to explore further during the scrutiny process.
- 4.2 As in previous years, the Committee's formal scrutiny was conducted over two days; the first of which was used to gather evidence; the second to agree its findings, conclusions and suggestions to Cabinet.
- 4.3 The Committee adopted a 'scrutiny café' approach to its evidence gathering and, for this purpose, the Council's service/budget areas were divided into 8 groups, based on the portfolios of each Executive Member:-
 - 'Children's Services'
 - 'Community Safety & Waste Management'
 - 'Highways'
 - 'Public Health, Localism & Libraries'
 - 'Adult Care & Health'
 - 'Enterprise, Education & Skills'
 - 'Environment, Planning & Transport'
 - 'Resources & Performance'

- 4.4 Members of the Committee were divided into eight groups, with each group assigned a portfolio from which to gather evidence based on the following themes:-
- Strategy and Capital Investment
 - Engagement
 - Performance, Standards & Targets
 - Sustainability, Deliverability and Implementation
- 4.5 All Members of the Council were notified of the scrutiny and were invited to attend. A number of Members took up this invitation and, with the Chairman's agreement, participated in the 'evidence gathering' part of the scrutiny.
- 4.6 The Committee reconvened on 3 February 2016 to agree its comments and suggestions for Cabinet's consideration.

5. Suggestions from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 The Committee's comments and suggestions on the draft Integrated Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 are set out in section 3 of the report above; they will also be considered by the Resources and Performance Cabinet Panel at its meeting on 12 February 2015. The Panel's comments will be reported to Cabinet.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications of the Integrated Plan proposals 2016/17 – 2019/20 are as set out in the Integrated Plan proposals also being considered at this meeting.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age;

disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken on the draft Integrated Plan proposals 2016/17 – 2019/20 and this is included within the Integrated Plan proposals also being considered at this meeting.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to take into account the comments and suggestions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when considering the Integrated Plan proposals.

Background Information

Reports & Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings held in October 2015 and December 2015